

PILFERING OF POSTAGE STAMPS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I have recently had occasion to call the Postmaster-General's attention to the temptation placed in the way of boy-clerks and others by the system of purchasing postage stamps from the public at post-offices, which leads to a good deal of petty pilfering. In reply, the Postmaster-General has addressed a letter to me, an extract from which is subjoined; and as it contains information that may be of some service to the mercantile world, you may think it worth while to lay it before your readers.

Very faithfully yours,

J. HENNIKER HEATON.

36, Eaton-square, S.W.

“ General Post Office, London, May 28.

“ Sir,—The Postmaster-General has had before him your letter of the 15th inst., together with the extract from a letter from Messrs. R. Vickers and Sons, of Leeds, which you forwarded, and I am directed by Mr. Raikes to point out that merchants and others can already secure themselves against the pilfering of stamps by their *employés* by having their stamps perforated with their initials as recommended in the *Post Office Guide*, page 27. Postmasters are instructed not to purchase any stamps so perforated.

“ It has recently been suggested that stamps perforated with a simple cross should also be refused when presented for sale at a post-office, and the Postmaster-General will have no objection to extending the prohibition to stamps marked with a cross if any considerable number of persons should think it worth while so to mark their stamps; but, in regard to perforating with a cross, it is obvious that such perforation affords much less security against theft than the existing method of perforating the owner's initials.

“ The perforation of postage stamps with the initials of the owners is undertaken by the persons whose names and addresses appear at page 1,913 of the ‘Post Office London Directory,’ viz.:—J. Sloper, 20, King William-street, E.C.; F. Braham, Post-office, 93, Tabernacle-street, E.C.; Allehin and Co., Post-office, England-lane, N.W.; and the Initial Perforating Company, 5, Little Love-lane, Wood-street, E.C., Mr. Sloper being, it is believed, the original patentee and manufacturer of machines for the purpose.

“ In regard to the case of theft at Leeds alluded to by Messrs. Vickers, I am to add that even unmarked stamps are not purchased repeatedly of the same person without inquiry, and that a lad becoming known by the frequency of his visits for the purpose of selling stamps would be called upon to account for his possession of them. There is, however, no recollection at the Leeds Post-office of the youth referred to by Messrs. Vickers.

“ I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

“ T. E. SUTTON.

“ J. Henniker Heaton, Esq., M.P.”

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